

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY China

DATE DISTR. 13 AUG 51

SUBJECT 1. Conditions and Controls in Tientsin
2. Rail Travel between Harbin and Tientsin

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1. In Tientsin in late 1950, regulation of retail business was increasing, and many businessmen were complaining that they would have to close their establishments because of the stricter controls. Each businessman has to obtain an annual renewal of his permit to operate and, even though these are issued freely, the number of private enterprises is decreasing. A new ordinance in early 1951 requires applicants for commercial licenses to list the items they intend to sell. Permission to open businesses is not granted to non-Orientals and even Chinese find it difficult to start a new enterprise.*
2. Taxes, at least theoretically, are not overwhelming. The owner of a small retail shop, for example, must pay two percent of his gross income to the economic section of the police. This percentage, however, is the minimum; the rate is progressively increased so that no successful businessman can operate without having most of his profit taken away in taxes.
3. Tientsin has many branches of commercial firms and representatives of Communist countries. There are numerous Polish trade representatives, newly arrived in 1951, and Czechs engaged in buying and selling for Czechoslovakian government firms. Tientsin merchants believe that shipments to Eastern European nations are going overland through the Soviet Union instead of by the former sea route.
4. Foodstuffs in Tientsin are ample and easily obtained on the open market without rationing. Prices are high but compare favorably with those of imported or manufactured articles. There is no black market in food and little in manufactured goods. The only remaining black market items appear to be the American dollar and gold. There have been several police campaigns to eliminate speculation in these fields and the new requirement for listing of commodities is interpreted as a measure to control black marketing.
5. A new police ruling requires that persons planning to make telephone calls must report the contents of the planned conversations in advance.** Telephones are tapped and telephone operators sometimes require identification of the persons making and receiving calls.
6. Trolley and bus services in Tientsin are operating normally and the rates

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have not increased in proportion to other prices. To leave the city limits by trolley or bus requires authorization and to go to Laku Bar by Ferry requires a police visa on the identification certificate. Non-Oriental persons are constantly stopped on the streets and required to show their residence certificates. As a result of the breaking of the anti-Communist espionage case,*** all travel outside Tientsin was stopped for foreign residents.

Persons sheltering new arrivals in Tientsin are required to report this at once to the district police. The new arrivals are promptly called to the main police office for a routine interrogation covering name, date and place of birth, relatives, occupation, employment history, education, property holdings, travels and other biographical information. No forms have to be filled out, however. About 10 days after the interrogation, the police issue a residence certificate**** for the newcomer to use as an internal passport. The certificate, which the holder is instructed to carry with him at all times, contains his description and the stamp of the Tientsin police. In one instance, a visitor to Tientsin was interviewed by police four times between the date he received his residence certificate and the date of his departure from Tientsin.

3. Regulations are strict for foreigners wishing to travel. It is possible, however, to obtain an exit visa***** [redacted] and approval for departure from the Chinese authorities within 10 days. The exit visa will be issued only if the applicant's passport is in order. An additional problem is obtaining steamship passage [redacted]

4. In late 1950, passengers traveling from Harbin to Tientsin by rail were not usually checked by security officers, either at the time tickets were purchased or during the journey. Travelers may be asked to show a Chinese exit permit at the Harbin station baggage room, however, so that personal data can be entered on the baggage tickets. Police frequently walk through railway cars. From Harbin to Tientsin by express takes 36 hours. The train has two classes, usually referred to as hard and soft. There are no sleeper accommodations and no first-class passenger services but food can be bought at all times on the train. Trains often include special coaches for Soviet personnel and high-ranking Chinese Communists and the best coaches on ordinary trains are designated for the Soviets. Local Soviets***** are not permitted to enter these coaches.

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[redacted] Comment. Although it was not so stated, this restriction may refer only to long distance calls.

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[redacted] Comment. This case was reported extensively in the press during March 1951.

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[redacted] Comment. This is issued only in exchange for the travel papers with which the person arrived in Tientsin.

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[redacted] Comment. This means only a visa for Hong Kong.

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[redacted] Comment. This term refers to emigres who obtained Soviet citizenship in China, as distinguished from Soviet citizens from the USSR.

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